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Jordan

Biotechnology

Annual

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Report Highlights:

Jordan does not have any agricultural biotechnology laws and regulations.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Annual Report
Amman [JO1]
[JO]

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jordan currently does not have any agricultural biotechnology laws or regulations. Jordan's lack of technical ability to enforce biotech laws precludes their passage. The benefits of biotechnology are not well understood and the public is, in general, conservative and suspicious about any biotechnology products.

SECTION II. BIOTECHNOLOGY TRADE AND PRODUCTION

Barley and wheat are the only two cereal crops produced in Jordan. In seasons with adequate rainfall, Jordan produces only 10 percent of its consumption. There is a small amount of resources devoted to biotechnology research by some universities working in cooperation with the National Center for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT) and regional institutions such as International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

Jordan's promising dairy and poultry sectors import all of their corn and soybean meal requirements from the United States and other sources that might use GM seeds. There is no testing mechanism to determine if such feed contains modified organisms, NCARTT is developing its capacity to perform such testing within the coming year.

SECTION III. BIOTECHNOLOGY POLICY

There is no clear agricultural biotechnology framework. To date, no biotech crops have been introduced or approved in the country. The Ministry of Environment <http://www.moenv.gov.jo> has issued regulations based on the Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force in February 2004. The regulations issued by the Ministry of Environment covers trade in biotech organisms, not biotech products.

Standards for the labeling of pre-packaged foods are regulated by the Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology (JISM) <http://www.jism.gov.jo> under regulation JS 9:2001, passed in March 2001. The regulation is equivalent to the Codex general standard for labeling pre-packaged foods. The main clauses in this standard are as follows:

- Name of the food
- List of ingredients
- Net contents and drained weight
- Name and address
- Country of origin
- Lot identification
- Date marking and storage instructions
- Instructions for use
- Quantitative labeling of ingredients
- Irradiated foods
- Exemptions from mandatory labeling requirements
- Optional labeling
- Presentation of mandatory information

According to the law an importer is held fully accountable on his shipment label contents. A shipment might be rejected based on label ambiguity even if it is only a printing error. No trade barriers were imposed on any imported product. However, the growing awareness of consumers about biotech may put future pressure on the government to regulate and control this technology.

No legislation is in place or even drafted that might have any impact on biotech products from the United States.

SECTION IV. MARKETING ISSUES

Marketing of biotech crops in Jordan is prohibited. However, producers are willing to harness biotechnology if its use increases profits. With importers, the issue of profit will play a major role in their trade decision. Consumers are expected to be highly reluctant to purchase such products due to lack of knowledge and the availability of substitute products. In addition, religious beliefs may play a critical role in their decision making process.